



*H. G. Morgan Esq.*

THE

*with kind regards of  
The Author*

# REPEAL AGITATION:

AND

**What** is to come of it?

ADDRESSED TO THE

PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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BY P. S. HAMILTON.

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HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED AT BARNES' STEAM PRESS.

1868.

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## TO THE PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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I do not know that I need make any apology for undertaking, as I now do undertake, to address to you a few observations upon certain political topics which are, at the present time, uppermost in the minds of all Nova Scotians who give any attention to politics at all. Although I occupy no public position which might seem to challenge attention to aught that I may have to say upon the more momentous questions of the day, it will be found that the remarks that I am about to make refer to subjects upon which I have already and repeatedly appeared before the public as a political writer, without the veil of the *anonymous*. An additional reason for my so re-appearing now is, that as I shall have to pursue a course of argument differing in some important particulars from that followed by every political journal in this Province, it is but fair for me to append my name to what I write, that nobody may be held accountable for my views except myself.\*

For many months past, an agitation has been going on in Nova Scotia in favor of a repeal of the Union of the Canadian Provinces, finally consummated on the 1st July, 1867. It is now about time for us to be able to consider this whole subject of Union calmly and dispassionately. In this relation, it is, for any practical purpose, little better than a waste of words to talk of what might be, or what should have been. To be sensible, we must gravely consider what has been and what is; we must consider the hard, indisputable facts that are before our eyes, and do so with a sincere desire to further our own best attainable interests, and to honestly discharge our practicable duties.

The incidents which go to make up Nova Scotia's share of

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\* It may be mentioned that the earlier pages of these observations were written in June last, before the return of the Repeal delegates from England, or the publication in Nova Scotia of the Duke of Buckingham's dispatch; and that they were originally intended for publication in the newspaper press.

the history of the Canadian Union are so fresh in your memory that I need not recapitulate them. The mode in which that Union was effected has created a vast amount of angry feeling in this Province; and certainly this is a fact not to be wondered at. I have reason to believe that it has not been a matter of surprise to anybody, within, or without, Nova Scotia, at all conversant with the circumstances of the case. What were those circumstances? Briefly then—only a few months before the celebrated Quebec conference of 1864, Nova Scotia was more desirous of this Union than any other Province which has since entered into it; and the measure had here been discussed for many years, and advocated by all our more prominent politicians of all parties.

True, a large portion of the people either had never thought very seriously of the matter, or were somewhat indifferent about it; but of actual opponents of the proposed Union there were none. No sooner was the Quebec Convention made public than, owing to causes which I took occasion to indicate in some letters upon this subject published about a year since, but which I need not recapitulate now, a small host of Anti-Union agitators appeared in the field. A number of these, whom subsequent events have proved beyond even the possibility of a question to be mere speculators upon human frailty, were particularly violent in their denunciations of Union and sedulous in poisoning the public mind against it. Every prejudice against fellow-colonists that could be created, or fomented, every fear that could be aroused, every angry passion that could be excited against the proposed Union, was vigorously plied by these affectedly virtuous and indignant quacks, as they "stumped" the country against Union. The Government of the day, with their Union measure in hand, and lately so elate in their confidence of carrying it, wilted down under the popular storm thus raised and appeared before the country like a gang of mischievous boys suddenly detected in the act of attempting to perpetrate some piece of trickery too heinous to be considered a joke, but who now declared they would not do the like again. The Union scheme was, in the legislative session of 1865, virtually forsworn by those who, but a few weeks before, had vauntingly declared their determination of carrying it during that session. Nothing can be more natural than that thousands of the people of the country should look with something worse than suspicion upon a definite measure, the consummation of which must obviously involve momentous results, which was thus dropped

as soon as it began to get ventilated before the country. The session of 1866 arrives ; and the Union measure, which the leader of the Government had declared his intention of abandoning, is again, and in as nearly a surreptitious manner as was possible, brought before the Legislature, and carried too—carried by the votes of the very men who, a short twelve-month before, had striven to impress the country with the conviction that its utter damnation was involved in the passing of this measure. And, as you are well aware, by the time another year had elapsed these double-dealing politicians received their virtuous rewards. With a cruel and most insulting mockery, some of them were elevated to the Dominion Senate, some to the Provincial Legislative Council, as the representatives of the people they had twice deceived, and by whom they were cordially detested ; whilst others were in other ways kindly provided for at the public expense.

What wonder that a large number of the people of Nova Scotia, who had not studied up the Union scheme, should be alarmed at the results of a measure brought about by such "by-paths and crooked ways"! What wonder if, in the first paroxysm of alarm, they refused to believe that anything could be good which had to be effected by such disreputable means and agencies! Human ingenuity could scarcely have devised any mode of bringing any great public measure before the people of Nova Scotia better calculated to arouse their fears and sting them to hostility, than the mode pursued with reference to this one of Union. The manifestations of both feelings were unmistakably manifested in the general elections of 1867. Although in those elections the innocent did, in some instances, suffer for the guilty, no Union man in the Dominion of Canada, however hearty in the cause, can blame Nova Scotia for the verdict she brought in on polling day. And indeed in all the reports of all the discussions which have taken place on this matter, outside of Nova Scotia, I have not yet seen that any person in a position to be conversant with the facts, has pretended either to blame the electors of this Province who have so emphatically made a record of their feelings in this matter, or to defend the conduct of those of their fellow-countrymen who have so grossly deceived them. The action of Nova Scotia on that occasion is recognized among all right-thinking men as the indignant protest of a free, spirited, but outraged people, against the chicanery of men whom they had too confidingly trusted, and by whom they had been grossly deceived.

It is time for us now, however, to consider whether the resentment thus kindled may not be carried to an extreme at once foolish and dangerous ; whether it has not already expanded in directions where it ought not to be manifested. Doubtless a number of those who recorded their votes in the Nova Scotia Parliamentary elections of 1867, did so as sincere opponents of Union of the Colonies ; but there were thousands of as sincere Unionists who, for the causes I have already named, voted for what were called Anti-Union candidates ; whilst by far the largest proportion of the electors did not look at the question of Union at all. With these latter two classes, it was not a great question of state upon which they felt called upon to decide. It was a question between man and man ; and they voted down the men and the nominees of the men who had treated them as if they were utterly destitute of any will of their own. These two classes ought to beware, however, not to allow the resentment they justly feel towards those who had tricked them into a Union with their fellow-colonists, to direct itself against Union itself. It is, I know, somewhat difficult to separate the two objects ; but it should always be remembered that many a good result has fortunately been attained by very improper means. In such cases, although the end never justifies the means, we should be cautious not to assume that the end is necessarily bad because the means by which it was effected were evil.

In what we may call the Anti-Union agitation which is now going on in this Province, an effort seems rather to be made to draw away the public mind from its original cause of resentment. We hear less and less of the mode in which the Union was brought about—of the treacherous double-dealing and venality of those by whose purchased votes the measure was carried. But Union itself—Union upon any terms—is denounced ; the statesmen of England, Quebec, and Ontario, are blamed for the part taken by them in effecting the Union ; and indeed, I may say in general terms, that no small measure of somewhat intemperate abuse is being daily hurled at those sections of the British Empire. I hope to be able to show, in the following remarks, that such a procedure is very unjust and very impolitic ; and that, if persisted in, it must materially damage the interests of Nova Scotia.

Recollect where this Union movement originated. It was not in the old Province of Canada, nor in New Brunswick, nor yet in England. It was in Nova Scotia. Here the first official step in that direction was taken in 1854, when the

Hon. J. W. Johnston laid upon the table of the House of Assembly, his resolution in favor of a Union of these Colonies. The only speakers on the subject besides himself, on that occasion, were the Honbles. Joseph Howe, William Young, and Martin I. Wilkins, who all expressed their deep regrets at the then disjointed condition of these Colonies, and warmly supported the policy generally outlined in Mr. Johnston's resolution. Although no vote was taken, the sentiments uttered by these four gentlemen certainly seemed to be unanimously concurred in by the House, and not one syllable was uttered by anybody against the proposed measure. The other parties who have since concerned themselves in the question of Union could scarcely fail to regard these facts as a most significant expression of opinion on the part of Nova Scotia. This was but a small step Unionwards, it is true; but still it was a step which doubtless produced immediate and important results upon the minds of the politicians of the other Provinces; and it was taken by the Legislature of Nova Scotia, which ordered the resolution and speeches just mentioned to be printed and circulated.

Let us come down to 1857. Canada had not yet spoken, New Brunswick had made no sign, on the subject of Union. On the 16th day of June of that year, at a meeting of the Executive Council of Nova Scotia, at which were present the Honbles. J. W. Johnston, Charles Tupper, Michael Tobin, Martin I. Wilkins, Stayley Brown, John J. Marshall, and John Campbell, it was resolved to send Messrs. Johnston and A. G. Archibald as delegates to England for the purpose of, among other things, urging upon the Imperial Government the importance of a Union of the North American Colonies. They did so urge; but, as shown by the report of the result of their mission, the British Government at that time, or at least the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Labouchere, was very indifferent about the matter. But here was an important fact, for which Nova Scotia alone was accountable, held up to the view, and for the consideration, of the neighbouring Colonies. The ministry of this Province, a strong Government at the time, representing a large majority of the electors of the country, formally and solemnly urge a Union of the Colonies; and one of the most prominent members of the Parliamentary Opposition so heartily concurs in the measure as to consent to become a delegate to England, in order to press it forward.

It was not until 1858 that Canada, led by the example of Nova Scotia, made the first move in this matter; but it does



not seem to have been a very energetic one. In that year, Messrs. Cartier, Ross, and Galt, on a delegation to England, addressed a letter to the Colonial Secretary of the day, Sir E. B. Lytton, urging the Union; but they received little encouragement, and the subject was dropped.

Nova Scotia, however, soon returned to the charge as to something upon which the heart of the country was set, by whatever party administration it might happen to be governed. In 1861, as you may remember, the Executive Council of this Province consisted of Messrs. Joseph Howe, A. G. Archibald, J. McCully, J. H. Anderson, William Annand, B. Wier, Jno. Locke, Colin Campbell, and T. D. Archibald. On the 15th of April, Mr. Howe, the leader of that Government, brought into the House of Assembly the following resolution:—

*"Whereas, The subject of a Union of the North American Provinces, or of the Maritime Provinces of British America, has been from time to time mooted and discussed in all the Colonies,*

*"And Whereas, While many advantages may be secured by such a Union, either of all these Provinces or of a portion of them, many and serious obstacles are presented which can only be overcome by mutual consultation of the leading men of the Colonies, and by free communication with the Imperial Government,*

*"Therefore Resolved, That His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor be respectfully requested to put himself in communication with His Grace the Colonial Secretary, and His Excellency the Governor-General, and the Lieutenant-Governors of the other North American Provinces, in order to ascertain the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and the opinions of the other Colonies, with a view to an enlightened consideration of a question involving the highest interests, and upon which the public mind in all the Provinces ought to be set at rest."*

This resolution was put to vote and passed unanimously, another fact which could not be interpreted outside this Province otherwise than as an emphatic expression of the public opinion in Nova Scotia. Owing, as Mr. Howe afterwards stated, to the facts that a general election occurred in New Brunswick in 1861, and that the island of Prince Edward was much occupied with a controversy that engrossed public attention in that year, no action was taken upon this question until 1862. In August of that year its consideration was urged by Mr. Howe upon the respective governments of Canada, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Early in September following, he, Mr. McCully, and Mr. Annand, with delegates from the other Provinces, held a conference upon this and other Intercolonial questions at Quebec; and it was afterwards semi-officially announced here that the Union policy was unanimously agreed upon. In this instance, Nova Scotia had, as usual, taken the initiative and solicited the co-operation of her sister Colonies to bring about this Union.

Nothing came of this Conference, however. Within the

ensuing year, Canada was kept in a ferment by a succession of fierce party struggles ; and Nova Scotia went through a general election and a change of ministry. The next step Unionwards was a somewhat awkward one ; but it eventuated in important results. In the Legislative Session of 1864, Dr. Tupper introduced and carried his resolution in favor of the utterly impracticable measure of bringing Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island into a Legislative Union. Almost at the same time, Canada, now and at last thoroughly in earnest, resolved in Parliament upon striking a vigorous blow for the more comprehensive measure to include all the Colonies, or, failing that, to federate Canada alone.

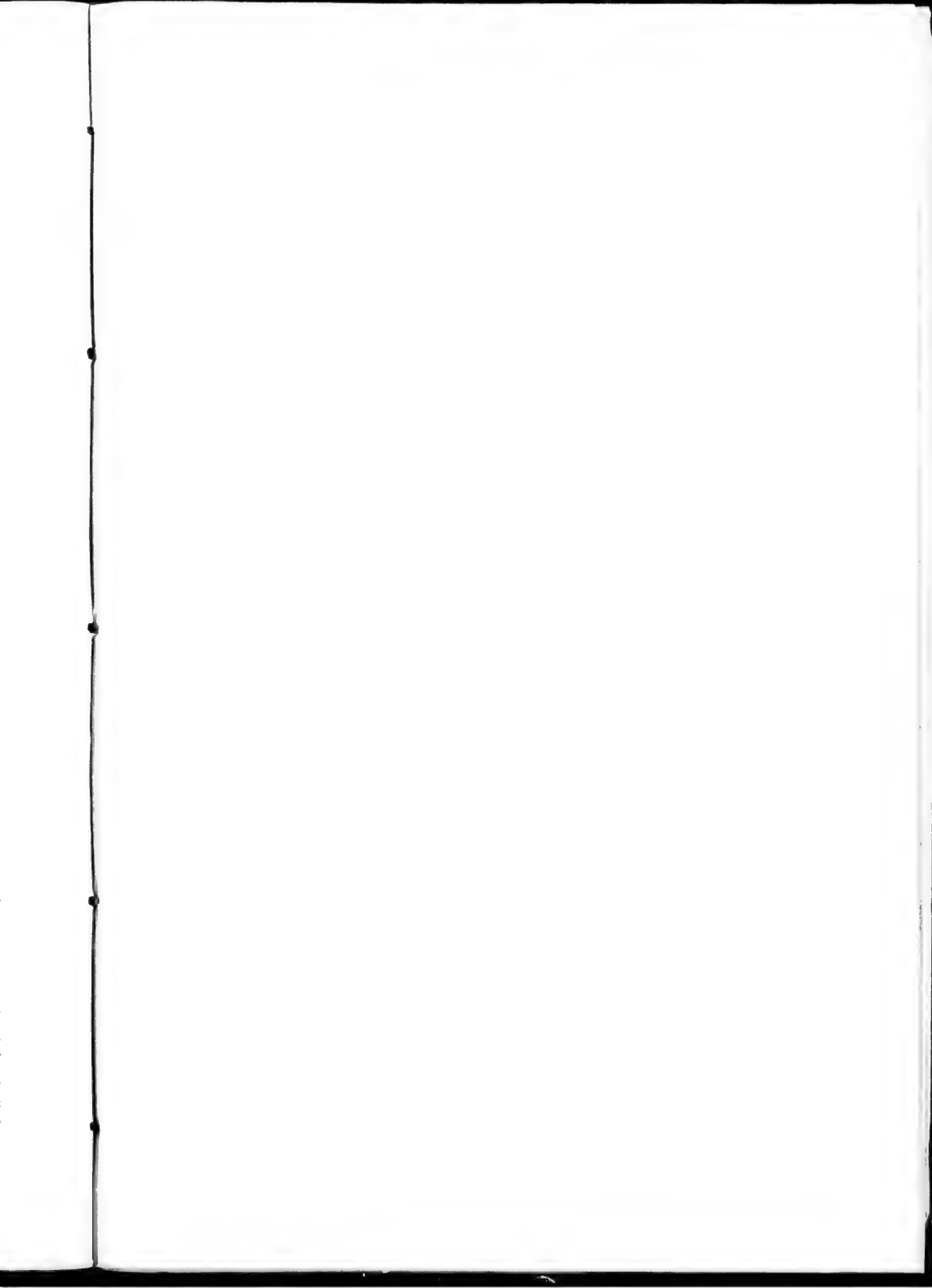
When the delegates of the Maritime Provinces met at Charlottetown in the autumn of 1864, it did not require many hours of Conference to enable them all to see plainly that, in the then existing state of affairs, a Union of the Maritime Provinces was simply an impossibility. Opportunely a delegation from the Canadian Government arrived upon the field and proposed—what? The very thing for which Nova Scotia had been striving, and vainly striving for years! The Nova Scotian delegates, and with them the delegates of the other Maritime Provinces, unhesitatingly accepted the Canadian proposal. Hence the Quebec Conference ; and you know the rest.

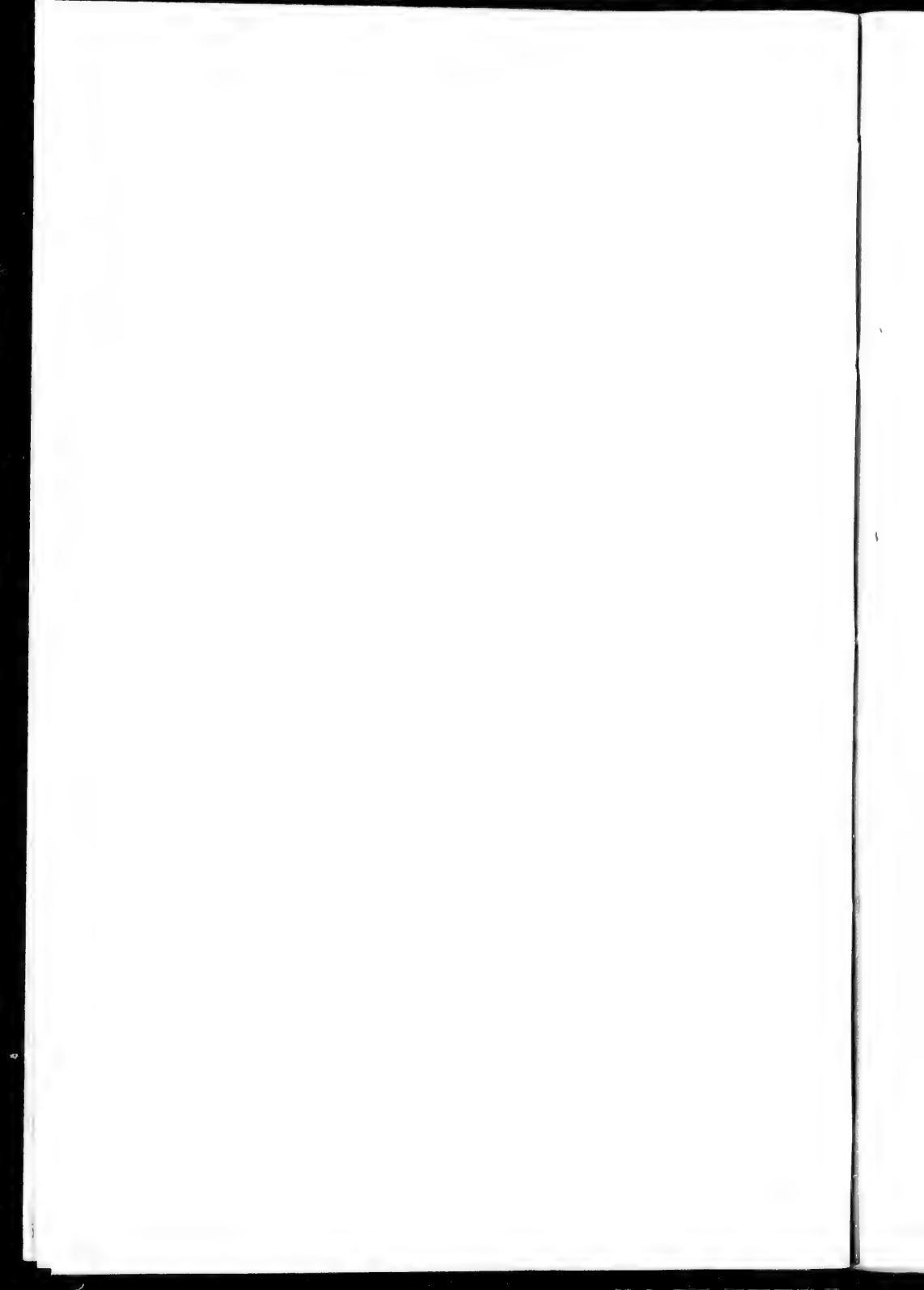
You must, therefore, see that from the very commencement of this Union movement down to the meeting of the Quebec Conference, in the autumn of 1864, Nova Scotia took the lead. It was Nova Scotia that first mooted the subject in Parliament. It was Nova Scotia that first urged this Union upon the consideration of the Imperial Government. It was Nova Scotia that repeatedly solicited the other Provinces to conjoin with her in elaborating and consummating a Union scheme. I am now speaking of the public and unanimous acts of the successive Parliaments and Ministers of Nova Scotia for a period of ten years, during which they may be reasonably supposed to have represented all shades of political opinion in this Province. But this is not all. When we come to look at the unofficial effort put forth in furtherance of this scheme, we find that Nova Scotia has taken a like prominent position far in advance of the other Provinces concerned. So long ago as 1848, a portion of the newspaper press of this Province was committed to the advocacy of Union ; and this policy became gradually adopted until, on the eve of the Quebec Conference, there was scarcely a political journal in Nova Scotia that was not

avowedly Unionist. Separate essays too, strenuously advocating that great constitutional change and emanating from this Province, were freely circulated throughout British North America. In short, I may say without fear of contradiction, that, down to the passing of the "British North American Act," more matter upon this subject had been published by the press of Nova Scotia than by that of all the other Provinces taken together. On the other hand, look at this striking fact. During all the years that the popular mind of Nova Scotia was kept in more or less of a ferment upon this subject; whilst Union was being freely and publicly discussed; whilst our Legislature solemnly voted for it; whilst our Government sent delegations to England, praying that the Colonial nuptials might be consummated; whilst Nova Scotia affectionately and repeatedly invited the neighbouring Colonies to become one with her for all time;—during all this time, down to about the close of 1864, not one petition to Queen, Governor, or Legislature, had ever been presented, not one line had ever been published, not one public speech had ever been uttered, in Nova Scotia, adverse to the projected British North American Union.

Such being the circumstances, could Englishmen, Canadians, New Brunswickers have dreamed for a moment that the consummation of the Union should be immediately succeeded in Nova Scotia, not only by an indignant outcry against Confederation itself, but by expressions of anger, not to say malignity, against *them* for having dragged us into this Union? It was Nova Scotia which has had years of dragging to get them into it. If there has been seduction anywhere, Nova Scotia is the seducer.

The course pursued by the public men of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick since the Union, is not a subject which I have now to consider; but here I would ask Nova Scotians: is it—I will not say generous—but is it fair—is it honorable—is it manly for us to rail out vehemently against the public men, the press, and the people of the other Provinces, and even against the countries themselves as specimens of nature's work, on the ground that they have dragged us into this Union? Is the Union a crime? Then we must look for the principal share of the guilt amongst ourselves, here in Nova Scotia, and not go beyond our borders to pile it upon other people's shoulders. Whatever may be the defects in the terms of the Confederation, it is now a fixed, irrevocable fact. The people of New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario, are our





fellow-subjects, our fellow-countrymen, our political brethren, and something nearer still. Their interests are our interests ; their honor is our honor ; their reputation is our reputation. Therefore, whatever else they may be, any contumely attempted to be heaped upon them by us, without good and sufficient cause, can scarcely fail to recoil upon our own heads.

I have shown by citing indisputable historical facts, how groundless was the charge against Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, of having dragged Nova Scotia into what it has become fashionable in some quarters to call "this hated Union." The same facts also go to prove how groundless is the like charge made against England. The Union complained of was not even projected by the Imperial Government. It was not assented to by the mother country until after Nova Scotia had been, for many years, earnestly and eagerly soliciting that measure at her hands. When at length that assent was given, it is obvious that British statesmen, of all parties and classes, gave themselves cordially to the scheme. And, in the name of all that is just or generous, how can they be charged with having in this matter acted tyrannically towards Nova Scotia? In strict accordance with her long established Colonial policy, and, further, with the Colonial policy of all modern nations, England was under no sort of obligation whatever to consider our wishes as to the sort of Constitution we would like. Heretofore, she, by her own act, and of her own free will, has given to Nova Scotia and to all her other Colonies, their Constitution in the first instance, and all the essential modifications and amendments of those Constitutions afterwards. Except in some particularly important cases, it has not been considered necessary that the British Parliament should be consulted in the matter ; but the Colony has accepted its local Constitution at the hands of whomsoever for the time happened to be the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as the product of his own individual brain, or that of some of his official subordinates. From whatever particular motive agent in the political mechanism of England, the Colonies have received their respective local Constitutions. will any of you have the kindness to inform me of the number of instances in the history of the British Empire in which a Colony has been asked to ratify, before being put in operation, the Constitution presented to it by the mother country? When Cape Breton was united to Nova Scotia, not only were the wishes of the people of that island not consulted, but they were grievously offended at the step which was thus

taken by a British minister on his own personal responsibility. When, about thirty years since, the two Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada suffered a suspension of their local political Constitutions, and were, by an Act of the British Parliament, brought into a Legislative Union, neither of them was consulted as to the justice, or policy, of such a step. There was no appeal to the people, no submission to the people's Parliamentary representatives in either Province, either to approve of the Union beforehand, or to ratify the Union Act after it had been enacted by the Parliament of England.

It would, then, have been in strict accordance with what had always theretofore been the policy of the mother country towards her Colonies, and what had never been questioned as a correct and sound policy, if Her Majesty, without any reference to our local authorities, had, in the exercise of her Constitutional rights and in a Constitutional manner, united *the whole* of her North American Colonies. That such a procedure was not adopted and acted upon, constitutes, in my humble opinion, the only ground of complaint against the statesmen of England who have been instrumental in bringing about this Union. You will admit, I have the presumption to say, that, if such a course had been pursued, there would have been no outcry on the part of Nova Scotia that a wrong had been committed. The loyalty which has ever characterized the people of Nova Scotia; the faith on your part that Her Majesty's Government has always intended to do what was right by these Colonies, whether it always took the most judicious mode of accomplishing this, or not; your knowledge that that government had a right to take such a course—these causes would have led you to quietly acquiesce in the position in which you were placed. You know it would. But the Imperial Government, if it erred at all, erred on the side of leniency. A continued determination was shown by that Government, whether Tories or Whigs happened to be in power, to do nothing in this matter until the several Provinces directly interested clearly and unmistakably evinced their desire to come into the Union. As we have seen, the very first entreaty made to England to unite the Colonies emanated from the Colonies themselves, and from the particular Colony of Nova Scotia. In the interview upon this subject which Messrs. Johnston and Archibald had with Mr. Labouchere in 1857, they were informed by him "that Her Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere with the determination to which the Colonies themselves might come on a point so im-

mediately affecting their own interests; and that if they should be of opinion that Union would advance their prospects, the Government would oppose no obstacle to the accomplishment of their wishes." The policy thus enunciated has been the policy pursued by that Government ever since. No step that could reasonably be expected to lead to any important practical results was taken by that Government until the three Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, had, by their representatives, presented themselves before the throne and requested to be confederated. The alacrity with which British statesmen of all parties then took hold of the proposed scheme leaves no room to doubt that it was one which had long commended itself to them, although they refrained from taking any active measures towards its consummation until the British Americans had themselves taken the initiative.

The foregoing statements are statements of fact which no man can disprove, and which no man will probably venture to gainsay. It has been alleged, however, and reiterated almost innumerable times, that the Imperial Government should have consulted the wishes of *the people* of Nova Scotia in this matter. Now, let us try to look at the simple facts, calmly and divested of all prejudice. As we have already seen, that Government, in accordance with the long established principles of its Colonial policy, was under no obligation whatever to consult Nova Scotia, or any other North American Province, in the matter at all. But waiving for the present this view of the case altogether, the British Government really did recognise a right in the people of Nova Scotia to be more than consulted relative to the Union project; it did defer to the evident wishes of the people of Nova Scotia, as expressed in the only Constitutional way in which they could be expressed; and it did what there was every reason to believe was in consonance with the wishes of the people, apart and distinct from any suspected personal views of their Constitutional representatives—for we must remember that ten years of agitation of this Union question had not elicited in Nova Scotia the utterance of one syllable of opposition to the proposed measure. But if a political Constitution is to be considered anything but a mere empty name, British statesmen looked to the only quarter where they, or anybody else, *could* look for an expression of the popular sentiment of Nova Scotia. They looked to the declaration of the people's representatives. To deny that the acts of Parliament are not, to



all intents and purposes, the acts of the people whom that Parliament represents, is to deny what is the very essence of the British Constitution. In 1866, the Legislature of Nova Scotia, by a large majority, passed a resolution authorizing the Government of the day to appoint delegates to co-operate with delegates from the other Provinces and with the Imperial Government, and clothing these delegates with virtually unlimited power, so far as Nova Scotia was concerned, to bind this Province to anything. England was both morally and constitutionally bound to accept such a resolution as the voice of Nova Scotia. Her statesmen could not be expected to know whether or not the people of this Province, who had been for ten years tacitly acquiescing in the Union movement, had suddenly suffered a change of sentiment on that subject ; nor was it their place to try to discover.

In short, then, the Imperial Government, *in the first place*, need not have asked for any expression of feeling, or opinion, on the part of Nova Scotia, before taking action in this matter of Colonial Union. *Secondly*, admitting for arguments' sake that Nova Scotia's feelings and opinions should have been taken into consideration, the Imperial Government, in the Summer, or Autumn, of 1866, was put in possession of what it was constitutionally bound to consider the expression of Nova Scotia's feelings and opinions ; for it was placed in possession of the solemnly avowed sentiments of the Parliamentary representatives of this Province. And, *thirdly*, the Imperial Government, without being under any sort of obligation to concern itself to know whether the constitutional representatives of Nova Scotia represented the real sentiments of their constituents, or not, had the best of reasons for supposing that they did represent them.

This question as to the feeling of us, the people—the electors of Nova Scotia, towards the British Government, is one to be considered entirely distinct and apart from that of our feelings towards those same “representatives”—towards those double traitors, I mean, who, one day, employed every effort at their command to poison our minds against Union on any terms, and, on the next, “for a consideration,” accepted, voted for, advocated Union upon *any* terms ; and towards those other “representatives” who so kindly bought and paid for these venial colleagues of theirs—paid for them with your honor, your reputation, and your best interests for an indefinite period to come. But, whatever you think your feelings ought to be towards these fellow-countrymen of ours, pray do not,

as just, and honorable, and sensible men, allow them to prejudice you against the statesmen and the people of England, Ontario, Quebec, or New Brunswick. A cool, calm inspection of all the facts must prove to you that we must look at home—here, in Nova Scotia—to find whatever wrong, whatever slight, whatever insult, has been inflicted upon the people of Nova Scotia. It is not England, Canada, or New Brunswick, that is accountable for any grievance you may have to complain of for the treatment you have received in the bringing about of this Union. As already stated, you must look “to home.” You must look to the men whom you yourselves, in the exercise of one of the most solemn duties that a British subject has to perform, have elected to be your representatives in Parliament—whom you, and nobody else, have authorized to make laws for your governance; to whom you have delegated the power to mould the Constitution under which you and your posterity have to live for, it may be, many centuries; and to whom you have consequently entrusted, with your eyes open, the dearest interests of yourselves and your children. Then, if Nova Scotians have themselves made a mistake in any way, do not let us act the unmanly part of trying to lay the blame upon others who are innocent. If a mistake has been committed, eventuating in wrong, slight, and insult to Nova Scotia, that mistake was in our electing men to be members of Parliament who were utterly unfit for the position. REMEMBER THAT. Yes: for many, many years, Nova Scotia has, at every Parliamentary election, allowed itself to be carried away by an excitement, often produced by very trivial causes, into the temporary madness and blindness of extreme partizanship; and consequently men who have just low cunning enough to turn these weaknesses to account for their own sordid purposes, without the intellectual capacity, or the moral sense, to comprehend how even they can be made available to forward the ends of statesmanship, have managed to get themselves thrust into the Legislature. And of such are the men who have been double-dealing with us on this Union question. If anybody is curious enough to undertake getting up a catalogue of *all* of these same speculators, he will perhaps be surprised to find of what apparently divers materials and opposite parties they are composed; and he will scarcely fail to be amused to perceive how often how many persons have changed places with whom in dealing with this question. He will laugh when he comes to look back and see the amount of *chasseé*-ing that has, with more or less of gracefulness, been performed in getting through this sett of Union Quadrilles.

I will venture to say further that, however deeply aggrieved the people of Nova Scotia, or any considerable number of them, may feel as to the mode in which they have been treated in this matter of Confederation, if they will only take to heart, in the right way, the lesson they have thus received, it will prove to be well worth to them more than all that it has cost. That lesson says: "Send men of honor to Parliament, whatever else they may be. It is often well for you to stick to your party; but it is better to be represented by a man of honor. It is well to have a man who can speak eloquently, write forcibly, administer ably—get such a one if you can; but it is better to make sure, if possible, that he is a man of honor. Do not try to tie up your Parliamentary representative with pledges, or to dictate to him, as to a mere delegate, the course you think he should pursue on every point. You cannot do it. It is better to feel assured that you can trust to his honor, and that when, if ever, he changes his avowed principles, as any honorable man may do, he will at once resign the trust you have reposed in him. Try earnestly and sincerely to pursue this policy at your elections, and there will be small danger of your ever getting be-Millared."

I have endeavoured to indicate why Nova Scotians have only themselves and their Parliamentary representatives to blame for any slight, or wrong, they have suffered in having this Province brought into the Canadian Union. But here we are, a part of the Dominion of Canada. The deed is done. Nova Scotia can never again by any possibility occupy just the position she was in before this Union was effected. The question for us to consider then is: what is best next to be done? That is, what is the *best practicable* thing to be attempted?

"Get the British American Act repealed," many still say. I contend that this is not practicable; and I suspect that most persons who have carefully read British history are of the same opinion. The very idea, *Repeal*, involves a principle which is, in the last degree, repugnant to the spirit of British statesmanship. Few persons have ever, down to the present day, entertained a doubt that Ireland was cajoled into a Legislative Union with England, by means which none of the really responsible agents could ever have dared to avow. Yet, for nearly seventy years Ireland has been unintermittingly—for much of that time, vehemently—contending for a repeal of that Union. During all that time Ireland had a large representation in both branches of the British Parliament, and

consequently the power of exerting a great influence upon the decisions of that Parliament. What has been the result of Ireland's agitation for Repeal? Tory, Whig, and *quasi* Radical administrations alike have never deigned to look upon that Repeal as a thing that, for a serious moment, could be thought possible. Gradually statesmen, scholars, men of title, of wealth, of respectability, have ceased to contend for Repeal, until now, at last, its only advocates are a widely scattered handful of partially insane, Godless, cut-throat Fenians. Can you for a moment think that little Nova Scotia, with a population scarcely, if any, more than one-thirtieth of that of Ireland, with a much smaller proportion of physical strength, and without a particle of influence in the Imperial Parliament, is going to carry out with that Parliament a successful contest for a repeal of *our* Union with the other Provinces of Canada? Surely, a few minutes calm consideration will convince anybody of the groundlessness of such a hope. The British Parliament, you must keep in remembrance, has passed that Act at the request of Nova Scotia, constitutionally expressed, and, as I think I have shown, with evidently the best of reasons for supposing that it was passed in accordance with the wishes of the populace of Nova Scotia. These facts account for the slighting manner in which the motion made on behalf of the Nova Scotian Delegates was, only a few weeks since, treated in that Parliament. Those who have petitioned for Repeal, and who feel wounded at the somewhat curt and summary manner in which their petition has been pooh-pooh'd, should take all the facts into consideration; and, if they do so, they will find much to palliate, if not to justify, the treatment on account of which they now feel so sore. In short, the British Parliament, with apparently the best of reasons and with the apparent concurrence of all the parties directly interested, has created the Dominion of Canada; and that Parliament has now dismissed the subject forever, and no trivial demonstration from any quarter will ever cause the question of Union to be revived as a serious question there.

From certain indications in Nova Scotia during several months past, I cannot but infer that this is precisely the conclusion long since arrived at by most of those who are ostensibly the "leaders of public opinion" here. And now the question is: What is to be done? Assuming that there will be no Repeal by the Imperial Parliament of the "British American Act," what next? Some curious alternatives have been hinted at, or broadly proposed of late. The *physical*

*force opposition* has been talked of. *Annexation to the United States* has been mentioned. *Persistent Anti-Union agitation—a determination to make ourselves generally disagreeable to everybody forever*—seems to find favor in some quarters. I do not know of any other notable alternative that has been advocated unless it is to *accept the position and make the best of it*.

Now, let us look our position fairly in the face. I ask you if any idea can be more absurd than that involved in the first of these alternatives. We contend that we, the people of Nova Scotia, have been insulted and ill-treated by a portion of our representatives in the Legislature. We have signally evinced our due appreciation of the tricky conduct of these men. We have indignantly inflicted upon them, or many of them, the punishment they deserved; and unfortunately some of the innocent have been punished for being in their company. Every legal and constitutional effort has been made to undo their work and to obtain a Repeal of the Union they have been the direct means of effecting. All such efforts have proved futile; and, as I have endeavored to show, and am sure every man in the Province, not blinded with passion, in his heart believes, all such efforts must continue to prove unavailing. What has been done thus far by the Anti-Confederate, or Repeal party, has been the natural and manly expression of the indignant feelings of a free and spirited people, who have been treated with slight and contumely by those in whom they had reposed their confidence. As such it is regarded by all of the world who are conversant with the facts. Nova Scotians are none the less respected abroad for the Anti-Confederate agitation that has been going on for the last twelvemonth. But this agitation has gone as far as it can with any credit to ourselves. Do not let us now make ourselves ridiculous. Do not, from the position of independent, high-souled men, let us drop into the attitude of petulant children. The fight has been fought out gallantly so long as a manly blow could be struck, and it is no disgrace now to good naturedly "throw up the sponge." Nova Scotia contending against the results of a piece of constitutional trickery, and against such heavy odds, so long as there was a reasonable hope of victory, was an object of respect for the world; but Nova Scotia, doubling up its little fists and setting the British Empire at defiance, becomes a laughing stock among nations. I find it difficult to conceive that this boyish crotchet could have ever seriously entered into the mind of

any person of mature years. It is probably only the angry talk of discomfited men, who do not really mean what they say ; but it is talk which is doing us ourselves much injury. If there really is any Nova Scotian to whom this idea of "physical force opposition" presents anything tangible and practicable as a means of effecting repeal, I beg of him to sit down calmly and alone to think over this matter, with the aid of the light of common sense. Let him ask himself, as a sane man : what could we do with our "physical force ?" I am confident that his answer to himself would obviate the necessity of any body's undertaking to prove to him the folly of our opposing physical force to the determination of the Government and people of England, and—I must add—of a preponderance of the people of Nova Scotia.

Still more unwise and also inexpressibly wicked is the hinted proposal of *Annexation to the United States*. I must apologise to my fellow-countrymen for even mentioning such a subject, however briefly, in any remarks addressed to them. But it has been mentioned by others, and I may refer to it. In reality, I do not—and, until indubitable proofs present themselves, cannot—believe that, regarding it as a question of principle, there is any Nova Scotian so unworthy of the name ; so destitute of all the feelings of patriotism and national honor ; so ready to earn the scorn and contempt of every right thinking citizen of the United States themselves ; such an unmanly, spiritless sneak ; that he would hold up his hand for "Annexation." Looking upon it as a question of interest, such a movement on the part of any Nova Scotian, at the present time, could be considered as only consistent with insanity, if there is anything consistent with that frame of mind. This term, *Annexation*, has been rather too much bandied about here of late. Union men, in the heat of controversy, have been too much addicted to applying to their opponents the extremely irritating name of "Annexationists ; a term which I believe is really as offensive to repealers as to any other class of the community. It has no effect here beyond that of producing increased hostility of feeling between the disputants ; but it is far otherwise abroad. It is one thing which has not inconsiderably helped to create a widely extended hallucination in the United States that Nova Scotia is eager to throw herself into the arms of that Republic.

I am about to say something that may sound extremely presumptuous, but I will presume to say it, nevertheless. I venture to say, then, that no living man knows and under-

stands you, my fellow-countrymen of Nova Scotia, better than I do. I will not enlarge upon the subject by uttering anything that may look like "blarney," or "palaver." I will not pretend to recount your good points, or hint at your weaknesses. To do so, would be to insult your intelligence. But I will say this :—If any man in Nova Scotia, in the present aspect, or in the now prospective aspect of affairs, should be so infatuated as to make any practical attempt to carry out the "physical force opposition" policy, or the "annexation" policy, you will teach him a lesson that will astonish him—and something more. There used to be amongst us a combined feeling described as *loyalty* and *patriotism*. The terms which describe this feeling have gone much out of fashion—too much so perhaps ; but the thing still exists, and to as great an extent as it ever did. It is one thing to feel and express indignation at a wrong, or a slight, inflicted by our own Parliamentary representatives, and to make that indignation felt in the proper quarter ; but it is quite another thing to forswear our allegiance to the Queen and trample upon the claims which our country has upon us. And this will be found, to his great grief, by any one—if such ever should turn up—who may be mad enough to indulge in the prank of putting the people of Nova Scotia to the test in this matter. Those too who, even now, are, through the press and otherwise, seemingly insinuating disloyal sentiments into the minds of the people of this Province, with doubtless no graver motive than that of pandering to what they believe to be the feeling of the populace, can little know what a strong under current of popular disgust at such a mistaken policy, is setting through this country and daily increasing in momentum. Those who indulge in these practices will find, soon or late, how terribly they are deceiving themselves.

As to the extent of even the Anti-union feeling itself in Nova Scotia, a very erroneous impression has gone abroad. It still remains to be proved, and I believe it will remain for ever to be proved, that a majority of the people of this Province, or ever a very large minority of them, are, or ever have been, opposed to Union. The elections of 1867 do not afford a test of the public feeling on that question. To my certain knowledge, thousands of electors who were as sincere and earnest Unionists as Nova Scotia could produce, voted at those elections for what was called the "anti ticket." I may frankly say that I was myself, one of that number, and profess to know a good deal of the feelings of others who did likewise.

Some of you have known me as a pioneer and an untiring advocate of the great cause of British American Union, of twenty years standing. I always have been, still am, and ever expect to be, an advocate and supporter of that Union. Yet, here in Halifax, in the election of 1867, I voted for five candidates who were *called* "Anti-Unionists." But I did not vote for them because they had *that* reputation. I merely mention this fact as an illustration, and to say that I know of very, very large numbers of others, in every constituency of the Province, who did the same thing, being, as I have every reason to believe, as sincere Unionists as I myself am.

Very reasonable conclusions that Nova Scotia is not Anti-Union may be arrived at from other facts. It has been shown through the newspaper press that the whole vote polled in the Province, in 1867, for the so-called "Anti ticket" fell far short of a majority of the total number of electors. Since many electors are indifferent as to public questions and rarely, or never, vote at all, this is, I admit, only negative evidence; but still it is conclusive as to the fact that a majority of the electors of Nova Scotia were not then desirous that the Union measure should be defeated. I must, in fairness, mention the numerous signed petitions for Repeal of the Union which have gone from Nova Scotia to England. But even these, admitting for argument sake that they are just what they purport to be, are very far from showing that a preponderance of the people of Nova Scotia wish Repeal. But again—and I say it with all respect for the sincere sentiments of many who signed those memorials—anybody experienced in petitions of that class in Nova Scotia well knows that they should be taken for something much less important than what they really purport to be. But the men who, since the passing of the "British America Act," have really been sincere Anti-Unionists and have striven vigorously for repeal, are themselves, I am confident, too deeply imbued with the spirit which should animate every free, intelligent, and law-abiding people to allow anybody to trifle with their allegiance, or cajole them into perpetrating a national disgrace. If, by a sudden and at the time unexpected movement, they have been, by one set of politicians, tripped up and pitched headlong into a political Union that is repugnant to them, they are not going to allow another set to deliberately lead them by the nose through a series of mad antics which can only bring ridicule upon themselves and force their country to the brink of ruin.

Here I am naturally brought to consider the third of the



alternatives alluded to above—*that of keeping up a persistent agitation in favour of repeal*. Of those three absurd alternatives this seems to be the only one that there is any reasonable probability of seeing adopted. It would appear that it is already adopted by certain parties. If any man were mad, or silly enough to openly avow himself the apostle, or the champion, of either of the other two, he would only bring ridicule, disgrace, and contempt, with probably a strong flavouring of legal, personal chastisement, upon himself and his followers, if he had any followers. I pray you to consider what will be the effect upon the interests of Nova Scotia of this third line of policy being pursued by any party considerable as to numbers, or as to power of noisily making themselves heard. Look at both sides of the question. On the one side is Union, an accomplished fact, with no prospect within the remotest possibility of its ceasing to be a fact, but—to put it in its worst light—a probability of many advantages to ourselves being derived from it if we peacefully accept and make the best of it. On the other hand there is still the accomplished fact, the prospectively irrevocable fact, with the certainty, by not peacefully accepting and making the best of it, of keeping Nova Scotia in an eternal, painful, profitless turmoil,—its people behaving like a community of the widely famed “Kilkenny cats,” instead of going about their business like rational and sensible human beings. Look at the question fairly and without prejudice, and that is all that you can make of it.

I am not now, going to enter upon the useless task of depicting the advantages that might be derived from a Union of these Colonies, a task to which, as a labor of love, I gave much time in past years. It is useless now to endeavour to talk persuasively to the people of Nova Scotia of the benefits they would derive from this, that, or the other kind of Union with the neighboring Provinces. As already observed, we must deal with what actually *is*. I may not think, and I do not think, that the “British America Act,” founded, as it is, upon the Quebec Convention, is a very desirable measure in all its details. Probably no person living does think it a piece of perfection. But it is a compound of compromises, imposing in itself no really great injustice upon any section of the people in the Dominion it created, and was probably the best measure that could have been framed under all the circumstances. Inasmuch as it is defective, let us amend it. We have the power; and we can improve our Constitution from

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year to year, as the circumstances of the whole community require. The pitiful cry that Nova Scotia is weak and helpless in this Dominion, is unworthy of us. Nova Scotians are quite capable of taking their own part in the Parliaments and Cabinets of Canada. If not, then it is quite clear that they are unfit to govern themselves as the people of an isolated Province; and that is what I am sure any Nova Scotian would be ashamed to admit. The idea that the other Provinces can, or will, combine to defeat the interests, or refuse the reasonable demands of Nova Scotia in any case, is preposterous. The conditions of this Dominion happen to be particularly unsuited to its people being divided into local political parties, especially of any long continued existence. Nothing can be more unreasonable than to suppose that there can ever be any marked hostility, or rivalry of interests, between Ontario and Quebec on the one side, and Nova Scotia, or the Maritime Provinces, on the other. The only Province in which anything approaching to an organized local party of imposing proportions seems possible, is Ontario; and even there it would almost of necessity be limited to what may be called *par excellence* the bread-growing section of the Dominion, that is the south-western portion of Ontario—say that part above the Bay of Quinté. That section of country has some peculiar interests to be legislated upon; but in that respect no more rivalry can exist between it and Nova Scotia than between it and *all* the rest of the Dominion taken together. There is a certain class of questions in which the Parliamentary representatives of a portion of Quebec—not even in this case of the whole, but of a largely preponderating proportion—might, owing to their speciality of race, present the appearance of a compact local party; but inasmuch as they did so, they would be opposed by all the rest of the Dominion. Neither of the two great divisions of old Canada has as many interests in common with the other as it has with Nova Scotia; and Nova Scotia has not, and there is no probability that she ever will have, any important local interests not shared in common with a majority of the remainder of the Dominion. Then why assume that the interests of Nova Scotia, *as Nova Scotia*, are jeopardized under this Confederation? or that they ever will be? I find it difficult to imagine anything more groundless than such an assumption—provided always, that Nova Scotia exercises the wisdom that an intelligent people ought to exercise in choosing representatives to take care of her interests.

There is a possible state of affairs, however, in which Nova Scotia, as a Province, may suffer at the hands of her sister Provinces. Should the representatives of Nova Scotia in Parliament insist upon constituting themselves a local faction, to oppose everything emanating from any other Province, and everything emanating from the Government for the time being, which, under our Constitution, must represent, not only the principle of Confederation, but the preponderating sentiment of the whole Dominion of Canada,—in such case we cannot wonder if the Canadians of the other Provinces eventually lose patience and cause Nova Scotia to feel the painful effects of giving way to a chronic state of ill temper. And although we might not be able to justify, could we severely blame such a procedure? Let Nova Scotians imagine the case reversed, and ask themselves how they themselves would like it if they were abused like the vilest of felons by a portion of the press and people of one of the other Provinces—perhaps they would not wait to ascertain how large a portion—and if every movement of their representatives in Parliament, no matter how important to the public interests, were sought to be thwarted by the same factious Province.

To keep up this agitation can do no good; for it can never succeed in effecting the object for which it has obviously originated. On the other hand, the inevitable disastrous results to the best interests of Nova Scotia of its continuation, are incalculable. All the “wrongs” which the most enthusiastic of Irish repealers have claimed for their country since the year 1800, have been as nothing in their effects compared with the unhappy consequences to Ireland of the Repeal agitation during that period. And the Repeal agitation itself has been utterly vain, and productive of no good whatever, in any direction. Is this to be the wretched condition of Nova Scotia too? And when the “wrongs” which Nova Scotia has had to complain of in connection with the consummation of this Confederation have already been redressed, or may be by herself peacefully redressed? Look at what this agitation has already done and is doing for us. There is an almost universal complaint through the country of *hard times*. The hard times are due to this very Repeal agitation more than to any other cause. Here, at home, local legislation has been at a stand still for four months past, to the great detriment of the public welfare. The minds of a large portion of the community are kept in an unhealthy excitement, which disables them from fitly applying their energies to the practical duties of life. To

people outside of Nova Scotia, this agitation seems to have a significance which is not really its due. Consequently British capitalists are afraid to invest money here, in a country whose future political and commercial position seems to them a doubtful one, and this at a time too when, were it not for this cause, British capital would be diverted to this country to an unprecedented extent. The people of the United States are living under the infatuation that Nova Scotia is eager to become annexed to those States, and is determinedly working towards that end; and in this delusion on their part exists the greatest obstacle to the improvement of commercial relations between the two countries. Why need they negotiate reciprocity treaties with a country of which they believe, and of which some very silly people have been striving to make them believe, they may shortly become the out-and-out owners? Between Nova Scotia and the other Provinces of the Dominion itself, there has not been that extent of cordial, social and commercial inter-communication that we should have seen had it not been for this cause of obstruction, and which would have added so much to the prosperity of them all. All this because it pleases some people to keep up an outcry for Repeal of the Union.

And what present, or prospective, benefit have we on the other side of the account? Nothing—absolutely nothing—nay, worse than nothing. Then why, as rational, intelligent men, —why suffer this state of affairs to continue, growing, as it must grow, worse and worse? Why wilfully keep ourselves any longer in a painful fever, only to destroy ourselves; for, remember, Nova Scotians, it is we, and we almost alone, who are the sufferers. Let us have done with all that, and be at peace, so that we may enjoy prosperity.

HALIFAX, JULY 28th, 1868.